



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

For Release: April 6, 2004

Contact: Sherry Llewellyn
(410) 313-2236

New Report Shows Total Crime Down in 2003 *Aggravated Assaults Increase*

A new report released today by the Howard County Police Department shows total crime numbers dropped by more than three percent between 2002 and 2003. The report provides year-end crime totals for 2003 and compares the data to the same crimes reported over the last five years.

After a significant drop in aggravated assaults in 2002, the number increased again in 2003, causing the total violent crime numbers also to be higher. Police made 127 arrests for this crime in 2003, almost half of the number of incidents. Aggravated assault is defined as an attack that is intended to inflict serious bodily injury and often involves a weapon.

“These assaults can be serious, both for the victims and the police officers who respond to these incidents,” said Police Chief G. Wayne Livesay. “While we did not see an increase in firearm use in assaults this year, we did see a jump in the use of knives and other dangerous weapons.”

The comparison also revealed a significant decrease in property crimes, which dropped below 7,000 for the first time in five years. Police handled fewer burglary and theft cases in 2003 than in 2002.

Assaults against police officers rose 12 percent in 2003, from 110 in 2002 to 124. Chief Livesay, as president of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association (MCPA), endorsed a bill again in this legislative session that would make it a felony, rather than a misdemeanor, to assault an officer in Maryland. While it appears unlikely the legislation will pass this session, the MCPA will continue to work in support of the bill.

###

Editor's Note: To request a copy of the complete 2003 Annual Crime Report, please call the Office of Public Affairs at (410) 313-2236.